**Word Stress – Warmup (Student’s Material)**

All English words with two or more syllables have patterns of strongly stressed and unstressed syllables. In words, strongly stressed syllables are pronounced for a longer time. Their vowel sounds are pronounced more clearly, and so are their consonant sounds. Unstressed syllables, on the other hand, have the opposite features. They are pronounced for a shorter time, and their consonant and vowel sounds are less clearly pronounced.

Word stress is important because it gives a recognizable shape to a word. Listeners understand which word is used because of its stress pattern. Many words that are quite different may differ only in the stress pattern.

\[ / \quad / \quad / \quad / \quad / \]

DEcent  desCENT  DEEpened  dePEND

In this chapter, you will learn to hear and produce word stress and use words of various stress patterns in telling short stories.

1 **Warmup**

Listen to the fable and fill in the missing words. Then write out the moral (meaning) of the fable.

A hare once (1) _________ of how fast he was. “I always win when I go my (2) _________,” he declared. I challenge any of you here to race with me.” The tortoise replied quietly, “I (3) _________ your challenge. All of the creatures in the forest laughed to (4) _________ . The hare said, “That’s a good joke. I could dance circles (5) _________ you the whole way.” “I (6) _________ that you keep your boasting to (7) _________ till

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you’ve (8) ____________ the race,” answered the tortoise. So, a course around a (9) ____________was fixed and the race (10) ____________. The hare took off right away and was soon out of sight. The tortoise was far (11) ____________, and the hare lay down to take a nap. The tortoise plodded on. When the hare (12) ____________ from his nap, he was (13) ____________ to see the tortoise just about to cross the finish line. The (14) ____________ rabbit again ran as fast as he could, but the tortoise won the race instead.

Moral: ___________________________________________________________
What is a syllable? (Student’s Material)

A syllable has one vowel sound. It can also have consonants before and after the vowel. Often a vowel sound can be spelled with more than one letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 syllable</th>
<th>2 syllables</th>
<th>3 syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>crea-tures</td>
<td>si-lent-ly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>a-way</td>
<td>vill-a-gers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>be-hind</td>
<td>re-ply-ing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hare</td>
<td>chall-enge</td>
<td>fin-ish-es</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 1

Count the number of syllables in each word. Write the number in the blank.

EX: race 1  4. replied  ____  8. quietly  ____

1. forest  ____  7. answered  ____  12. instead  ____
2. animals  ____  8. finished  ____  13. course  ____
3. mountain  ____  9. tortoise  ____  14. declared  ____
4. decided  ____  10. laughed  ____  15. entire  ____
5. joke  ____

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Stressed Syllables (Student’s Material)

All English words of two syllables or more have one syllable that is strongly stressed. This syllable takes longer to say than the other syllables. It is lengthened. Its vowel sound is also pronounced more clearly so it is easier to hear. These two clues, greater length and vowel clarity, are found in all stressed syllables.

Exercise 2

Listen and mark the stressed syllable for each word with a stress mark over the vowel letter(s) of the stressed syllable. Follow the example.

/EX:  forest 4. sudden 8. mountain
1. surprise 5. reward 9. contain
2. behind 6. again 10. either
3. themselves 7. other 11. around

Exercise 3

Say each word with the stress patterns. Say the stressed syllable for as long as it takes to stretch a rubber-band between your thumbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First syllable</th>
<th>Second syllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>golden</td>
<td>assured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. forest</td>
<td>supposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. husband</td>
<td>became</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. either</td>
<td>deprive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>couple</th>
<th>themselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>plodded</td>
<td>behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>challenge</td>
<td>away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>foolish</td>
<td>again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unstressed Syllables (Student’s Material)

Most English words of two syllables or more have at least one syllable that is unstressed. These syllables are said much more quickly than the stressed syllables. Their vowel sounds are also pronounced less clearly so they are harder to hear. Most unstressed syllables have the same sound, called schwa. The symbol for schwa is [ə]. Schwa can be pronounced in two similar ways, like the vowel sound in “but” and like the vowel sound in “it”. Because unstressed syllables are pronounced so quickly, English speakers usually don’t think about which sound is used. Examples of syllables with schwa are

- finish
- challenge
- about
- behind

NOTE: Schwa can be pronounced either [ə] or [ɪ]. Native speakers of English do not usually distinguish the two sounds.

Exercise 4

Each word has two syllables. Listen and highlight or circle the unstressed syllable in each word.

**EX:** a- lone

1. hus-band
2. be-come
3. shout-ed

4. be-cause
5. vill-age
6. a-gain
7. sup-posed

8. dif-fer
9. rab-bit
10. de-prive
11. wag-es

Exercise 5

Listen and highlight or circle the unstressed syllable in each underlined word.

1. A hare once boast-ed.
2. He declared he was fastest.

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3. He **challenged** everyone.
4. I **accept** your challenge.
5. The animals lived in the **forest**.
6. He ran **around**.
7. He **suggests** that you wait.
8. The race went near a **mountain**.
9. He ran **away**.
10. The **tortoise** started slowly.
11. The tortoise **plodded** on.
12. The hare was **surprised**.
13. The rabbit ran **again**.

**Exercise 6**

**Pairs.** Retell the story of the Tortoise and the Hare to each other from the words that are given. Add any words that are needed to make full sentences. For two-syllable words, pay attention to lengthening stressed vowels and saying unstressed vowels more quickly. Tell the sentences that are marked for you. After retelling the story once, switch parts. Give each other feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Example  

hare / boasted / how fast / was.

“The hare always boasted about how fast he was.”

**Student 1**

1. always win / when / race / the hare said
2. challenge / anyone / race with me
3. tortoise replied / I accept / challenge

4. All the animals / the forest / chuckled / themselves

5. That’s / good joke / the hare said

**Student 2**

6. I could / dance circles / around you / whole way

7. tortoise replied / I suggest / you stop boasting / until / you finish race

8. A course / around a mountain / was fixed / and / race started

9. the hare / took off / right away / and / soon / out of sight

**Student 1**

10. tortoise / plodded on

11. hare / lay down / take a nap

**Student 2**

12. When hare woke up / surprised to see / tortoise / finish line

13. foolish rabbit / ran / but / tortoise / won the race
Communication Practice (Student’s Material)

Exercise 7

Pairs. The set of pictures below tells another well-known fable. Listen to the story as you follow the pictures. Below each picture are words that help tell the story. Retell half of the story to your partner. Listen to your partner retell the other half. Give each other feedback and suggestions for improvement. Practice until you can tell the story clearly and fluently.

1. Shepherd/ tended/ sheep/ forest
2. because/ alone/ made up/ plan/ get/ company

3. he/ called/ "Wolf, wolf."

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4. villagers/ came/ help/ but/ no wolf

5. a few days later/ tried/ same trick

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6. Again/ villagers/ came/ but no wolf

7. Before long/ wolf/ really appear
8. boy/ shouted/ "Wolf, Wolf"/ loudly

9. nobody/ came/ help
Exercise 8 (The goose that laid the golden egg)

**Pairs.** The set of pictures below tells another well-known fable. Listen to the story as you follow the pictures and take notes. Then retell half of the story to your partner. Listen to your partner retell the other half. Give each other feedback and suggestions for improvement. Practice until you can tell the story clearly and fluently.